

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-15 L-03

OMB-01 AID-20 DRC-01 /110 W
----- 063729

R 101450Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5281

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, CS

SUBJECT: TENTATIVE POLITICAL SOLUTION WORKED OUT IN
SITET/ICE CONFLICT

REF: SAN JOSE 3563, 3550, AND 3546

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: MOMENTS PRIOR TO START OF SITET'S
EXTRAORDINARY ASSEMBLY OCTOBER 5 CONVOKED TO DISCUSS
UNION'S NEXT STEP IN ITS CONFLICT WITH ICE, SITET
SECRETARY-GENERAL GUIDO NUPEZ AND LABOR MINISTER
FRANCISCO MORALES AGREED ON FORMULA TO RESOLVE THE MOST
PRESSING ASPECT OF DISPUTE, NAMELY ICE'S FIRING OF EIGHT
SITET ACTIVISTS. THE AGREEMENT WOULD BE SUBJECT TO THE

UNDERTAIN# APPROVAL OF PRESIDENT FIGUERES, WHO ONLY LAST
WEEK LAUNCHED A VICIOUS ATTACK AGAINST NUNEZ. END SUMMARY.

2. THE EMBASSY HAS LEARNED THAT LABOR MINISTER FRANCISCO
FYANCISCO MORALES MET WITH ELECTRICAL WORKERS UNION
(SITET) SECRETARY-GENERAL GUIDO NUNEZ ON AFTERNOON
OF OCTOBER 5 AT THE LABOR MINISTER'S REQUEST TO WORK OUT
A FORMULA FOR RESOLVING THE UNION'S CONFLICT OVER ICE'S
(COSTA RICA ELECTRICAL INSTITUTE) DISMISSAL OF EIGHT SITET
ACTIVISTS. ALTHOUGH BY THEN SITET HAD ALREADY ORDERED
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ITS WORKERS BACK TO WORK FOLLOWING INEFFECTUAL 1-DAY

STRIKE, LABOR MINISTER MORALES AND PLN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE DANIEL ODUBER REMAINED CONCERNED ABOUT A POSSIBLE RENEWAL OF THE SITET WALKOUT AGAINST ICE AND BY OTHER UNIONS SYMPATHETIC TO SITET AGAINST OTHER GOVERNMENT AUTONOMOUS INSTITUTES. BOTH WERE ALSO WORRIED ABOUT THE EFFECT THAT PRESIDENT FIGUERES' HARSH ANTI-SITET SPEECH OCTOBER 3 MIGHT HAVE ON THE DEMOCRATIC LABOR MOVEMENT'S RELATION WITH THE PLN PARTY IN AN ELECTION YEAR. UNDER THE PROPOSED AGREEMENT, WHICH WAS QUICKLY ENDORSED BY ODUBER AND TRANSPORT MINISTER RODOLFO SILVA, A MEMBER OF THE ICE BOARD WHO ASPIRES TO A CABINET POSITION UNDER AN ODUBER ADMINISTRATION, THE EIGHT ICE WORKERS, FIRED FOR THEIR ROLE IN ANOTHER ABORTIVE SITET STRIKE LAST JUNE, WILL BE GIVEN JOBS IN GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES UNTIL NEXT MAY WHEN PRESIDENT FIGURES' TERM EXPIRES AND ODUBER TAKES OVER. AT THAT TIME, THE EIGHT WILL BE REINSTATED AT ICE. THE AGREEMENT PRESUMES AN ODUBER VICTORY IN FEBRUARY AND THE REPLACEMENT OF SEVERAL HARD CORE ANTI-UNION MEMBERS OF THE ICE BOARD OF DIRECTORS BY THE INCOMING ADMINISTRATION.

3. AT SITET'S EXTRAORDINARY ASSEMBLY HELD OCTOBER 5, MINUTES AFTER THE TENTATIVE AND STILL CONFIDENTIAL AGREEMENT WAS REACHED, NUNEZ ABSTAINED FROM GIVING ANY DETAILS OF HIS MEETING WITH MORALES AND CONFINED HIMSELF TO INFORMING THE UNION MEMBERS THAT A SETTLEMENT WAS IN THE WORKS. TO GIVE NUNEZ SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL NEGOTIATING CARDS PENDING THE DEFINITIVE RESOLUTION OF THE DISPUTE, THE ASSEMBLY VOTED THAT THE UNION'S "STRIKE DECLARATION" AGAINST ICE REMAIN SYMBOLICALLY IN EFFECT, EVEN THOUGH THE UNION HAD ALREADY ORDERED THE WORKERS TO RETURN TO THEIR JOBS.

4. COMMENT: THERE IS NO CERTAINTY THAT THE AGREEMENT WILL EVER BEAR FRUIT EVEN THOUGH IT IS BEING SUPPORTED BY MINISTERS MORALES AND SILVA AND PLN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE DANIEL ODUBER. PRESIDENT FIGURES WILL HAVE THE LAST WORD, AND AFTER HIS BITTER PERSONAL ATTACK AGAINST SITET'S NUNEZ, DON PEPE'S REJECTION OF THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT COME AS A SURPRISE. A FIGUERES REJECTION OF THE ARRANGEMENT WOULD FURTHER ANTAGONIZE SITET IN PARTICULAR, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND THE DEMOCRATIC LABOR MOVEMENT IN GENERAL, WITH A POSSIBLY NEGATIVE ELECTORAL IMPACT FOR THE PLN. WHATEVER THE OUTCOME, HOWEVER, THE DAAL AT LEAST HOLDS THE PROMISE FOR A RESOLUTION OF THE MOST EXPLOSIVE ASPECT OF THE SITET DISPUTE WITH ICE, A SOLUTION THAT THE DEMORALIZED UNION COULD HAVE NEVER ASPIRED TO WITHOUT THE INTERVENTION OF THE POLITICIANS. VAKY

NOTE BY OCT: #AS RECEIVED.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, ELECTRICAL INDUSTRY, LABOR UNIONS, EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: collinp0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SANJO003601
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: SAN JOSE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731040/aaaabdqx.tel
Line Count: 117
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: SAN JOSE 3563, 3550, AND 3546
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: collinp0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17-Jan-2002 by martinjw>; APPROVED <21 FEB 2002 by collinp0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TENTATIVE POLITICAL SOLUTION WORKED OUT IN SITET/ICE CONFLICT
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, CS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005